

# Anti-Cig Spots Getting One-Third The Play But Seem Two-Thirds More Convincing Than the Paying Pitches

By CARROLL CARROLL

The public service anti-cigarette commercials grow better and better while the butts plugs, coming one after the other in rapid succession, grow less and less convincing. The battle between the tobacco industry and those who think cigarettes shouldn't be advertised on the air (or anywhere else) is a strange (and some think unholy) confrontation.

To begin with, the odds are, by agreement, 3-1 in favor of the industry. Three cigarette spots for every warning. How come? Well, when both sides sat down with the FCC and tv management to hammer out a schedule that would allow everybody to make money and save face, an attorney for the FCC, when asked what he thought would be a fair formula for tv to follow in running the anti-cigarette blurbs, ad libbed the 3-1 ratio and the industry grabbed it.

Fair?

Depends on which side of the table you're sitting and whether your main interest is dollars or sense. Clearly it's a public service to warn people that polluting your lungs with nicotine, tar, resin and gasses can cause cancer and other serious ills, just as it's in the public interest to caution against starting forest fires, littering the streets and running red lights.

On the other hand, the anti-cigarette campaign is the only one in direct conflict with an established industry. Nobody is writing commercials urging accidents to go out and happen. Nobody is running plugs to contradict Smoky The Bear. No one is making money littering the streets and highways. So no matter how strongly you feel against advertising cigarettes on the air, you've got to admit that there's something unfair going on when one group spends millions of dollars for air time while its competition is given one-third as much time sur-le-cuff. And what's even more perplexing (or is it?), the apparent victims of this one-sided arrangement agreed to it.

## 67% Better

However, anti-smoking spots appear to be even-ing the odds by getting two-thirds better. Take the ID that opens (and closes) on a man standing with a cigarette in his hand. He looks at it thoughtfully, then at you, and says, "Have you ever thought what happens to you when you light a cigarette? (Pause.) We have" The next thing you see is the logo for The American Heart Association.

It makes you think, if you've got what to do it with.

Meanwhile, Benson & Hedges rummage around in their minds to find more "disadvantages" to smoking their 100s (carefully side-step-

(Continued on page 52)

## Anti-Cig Spots More Convincing

Continued from page 33

ping the main disadvantages). Pall Mall says "you make out better at both ends" because they left the banana out of their long cigarettes (which deserves an Oscar for goofy advertising claims). And Winston gives you the hot tip that "it tastes good like a cigarette should?"

In answer to all this the Cancer Society and Heart Association go right on socking it to you about what goes on in your guts while you enjoy a smoke that's one silly millimeter longer, walk a mile for a Camel, or become a chainsmoker because you asked the man next door if he saved Raleigh coupons and he said, "That's how I got my new wife." There are some of the benefits offered, at 3 for 1 odds, proving conclusively that with cigarette commercials, too, "it's not how long you make them but how you make them long."

Shaving the odds with a strong emotional attack, is that spot about a man and his son taking a walk in the sort of country you can't seem to take Salem out of. The lad tries to match his dad stride for stride, to throw a rock the way his pop does. Every move the man makes the boy proudly imitates. How else should a son feel about his father?

## Don't Let Kids 'Butt' In!

At last they rest under a tree. The man takes out his cigarettes, lights one and lays the pack on the grass. The boy picks it up, looks at it and then with admiration at his old man. Could there be a stronger argument for parents to stop showing their children how to smoke and to start being very careful about everything else they do for the mini-mind to mimic?

Yet, for every more or less mature person weaned of smoking, for every dude who deserts Marlboro country, some juvenile picks up a pack of butts and tries on a habit. Tell him smoking's stupid and he'll look right past you as he says, "Who wants to live forever?"

With the world what it is, you may agree. But what the little nuts can't get through the generation gap in their heads is that cigarette smokers don't just enjoy themselves up to a certain point and then terminate. What the little dum-dums don't collar is that there's nothing groovy about vegetating with a bad heart, that cancer hurts a lot and that breathing's better than emphysema.

Take a look at that anti-cigarette western. The killers enter a saloon. Everyone hides. The men light their cigarettes. Then they start to cough . . . and cough and cough and cough and cough till it's clear who the killers really are. It's a perfect parody and a pretty good parable.

## And a Happy Titanic To You, Too!

Moving from parody to irony, there's the one that features some of those beautifully shot bucolic landscapes in which a romantic boy and girl holding hands long enough to light up and look at each other with love. But in this one, while you're watching the happy pair dreaming of their future, a voice is telling you what the smoke is doing to their lungs. It's like that famous love scene aboard the Titanic

In a current FTC study the five cigarettes found to have the lowest tar content (all filters) included none of the heavily advertised brands. (The study may change this.)

Recent news items claim (1) that half of the doctors who once smoked have quit, and (2) that cases of lung cancer have risen sharply.

Spokesmen for a large tobacco company (R. J. Reynolds) said, "non-filter brands are down . . . filters are showing an increase"—"growth in the tobacco industry has been slowed . . . but the industry, as a whole, is essentially strong." The company has started to diversify, as have other large tobacco firms, a possible straw in the wind.

Make a note of this. If you, too, had kicked a three-pack-a-day habit back in 1939, you would by now have saved around \$4,979.38. And that's figured at the 1930 price which was two packs for two bits. Start saving now for your old age.

## Specialized Reefers

There's another new cigarette on the market, Virginia Slims, that

claims to be made just for women and to have the flavor women like best—Virginia. This information was probably attained by hanging around grapejuice joints counting the dames who asked for Virginia Dare.

This new skinny-minny smoke appeals to the girls by reminding them of how far they've come since they had to wear a lot of clothes, fight for the vote and hide in the attic to grab a few drags on a Milo.

Although the claim is that women, at last, have their very own butts—oop, sorry! — the truth is they once had the aforementioned milos which were oval, lavender-scented, came 10 in a box and were rejected by women 45 or 50 years ago.

This raises the question, if women didn't want their own cigarette then; when they needed it, do they want it now? Or should a gentleman offer a lady a Tiparillo?

This much is sure, if Virginia Slims succeed, cigarettes will grow more and more specialized in their appeal till we wind-up with Texas Talls for ollriggers, Kentucky Shorts for jockeys, New York Broads for mainstem hustlers, and, of course, Minnesota Fats for pool hustlers.

There is a lady now making an appearance in a Polident spot who says, "I can't afford denture odor."

This is to advise you, folks, that the situation has changed. With the residuals from that Polident job she can now afford almost anything.

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